

To: The Examiner of the Japanese Patent Office

1. International Application PCT/JP2004/00516

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4. Date of Notification May 11, 2004

5. Content of Reply

(1) Claim 1 is amended as follows;

A masking member made of a modified polypropylene sheet in which 5 to 30% by weight of polyethylene and/or ethylene-propylene copolymer is mixed in with polypropylene, said masking member being manufactured by vacuum and/or pressure forming, said modified polypropylene into a prescribed shape.

In the invention of said amended Claim 1, a masking member having a complex shape is provided by vacuum and/or pressure forming, since said modified polypropylene sheet does not droop under its own weight, even when said sheet is heated at a temperature at which said sheet is moldable.

(2) Literature 1 (JP9-71754 A) discloses a masking tape made of an ethylene-propylene copolymer sheet, but said sheet lacks the hardness required to be molded by vacuum and/or pressure forming. Said masking tape of this Literature is an unmolded sheet.

(3) Literature 2 (JP9-272849 A) discloses a masking tape made of a polyolefine resin

film, but since polyolefine single film may be apt to droop under its own weight by heating at the temperature at which said film is moldable, molding with high accuracy may be difficult, as described in the section 'BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION' in the specification of the present application.

(4) Literature 3 (JP11-276947 A) discloses polypropylene, polyethylene, ethylene-propylene copolymer, and the like, as the masking member materials, but does not disclose the use of the compound consisting of polypropylene and polyethylene and/or ethylene-propylene copolymer, so that the effect of the present invention is unforeseen, said effect being that a sheet of this compound, in which polyethylene and/or ethylene-propylene copolymer is mixed in with polypropylene does not droop under its own weight when said sheet is heated at a temperature at which polypropylene is moldable, and vacuum and/or pressure forming moldability is improved.

(5) Literature 4 (JP5-317767A) discloses a masking tape, or sheet for coating having a support made of a copolymer of olefine and unsaturated carboxylic acid or a copolymer of olefine and other vinyl monomer(s), or neutralized substances of said copolymers, but the compound of the present invention is not disclosed, and further, the vacuum and/or pressure forming of said sheet is not disclosed, so that said effect of the present invention is unforeseen from the disclosure in this Literature.

(6) Literature 5 (JP3026624 U) discloses a masking tape, having a backing layer made of polypropylene, polyethylene ethylenepropylene copolymer, and the like, but the compound of the present invention is not disclosed in this Literature, so that the effect of the present invention is unforeseen from this Literature.

(7) As described above, Literatures 1 to 5 do not disclose the compound of the present invention, so that the effect of the present invention is unforeseen from the disclosures in Literatures 1 to 5, and as a result, the present invention has an inventive step.

6. The list of attached document: Amendment